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## The U.S.S.R.'s Peace Proposals

THE opening weeks of the year 1929 are very significant from the aspect of international politics. The tendencies towards international conflicts, towards war, which are inherent in the inter-relationships of the imperialist States, have been shown with fresh force in various sections of the international front. It was not for nothing that the traditional new year articles in the bourgeois press bore the impress of care and uncertainty in the customary discourses on the world development of capitalism. One need not quote Lloyd-George, who in the search for votes has been transformed into a professional prophet of the woes and disasters threatening the world as a result of the fact that he, Lloyd-George, is not participating in the direction of the destinies of capitalist Europe. But it is characteristic that the customarily restrained writer on international politics in the German liberal-democratic "Vossische Zeitung," who is active in defence of the idea of the pacification of Europe with the aid of the League of Nations, was in his new year article forced

to admit the existence of a tense situation in Europe. In the eleventh year after the close of the war he is forced to ask the question: "Was the world war really the beginning of the great European revolution, will a still greater revolution follow this? Like a menacing cloud a crisis hangs over Europe, and everyone of us has the feeling that nothing has been done yet."

The declarations of the social-democrats at the beginning of 1929 are in complete accord with the reformist tradition and in strict contradiction to the reality. Kautsky in particular could find nothing better to say than that 1929 would prove to be the beginning of an era of socialist expansion—evidently within the framework of capitalism.

WHAT are the basic facts characterising the international situation at the beginning of the year, which according to Kautsky is opening the extraordinary era of the "socialist development of capitalism"? In the first place, one has to note the preparations



for negotiations concerning the reparations problem, negotiations which by all the signs (and in particular the participation of the world usurer, Morgan, in them) should represent the next attempt of London, Paris, New York and Berlin banking capital to regulate the problem of international indebtedness, and thus to clear the ground for further rivalry. It is characteristic that representatives of banking capital are among the first to become members of the commission of experts from all countries.

Along what lines the leading imperialist Powers propose to direct their activities in the event of the difficult problem of reparations being regulated, can be seen from the events of the last few days. These events occurred immediately after the tension over financial problems between London, Paris and Berlin had been relieved. Very soon after the close of the Lugano Conference (at which evidently the direction in which the commission of "independent experts" was to work was predetermined) the Franco-British bloc turned its attention to other problems of international politics.

**T**HE attention of both Paris and London is fixed in a very definite direction. Just as bandits attempting to burn down a house try to start the fire in several places at once, so the imperialists are lighting the flames of war on the various frontiers of the Soviet Union. In the Far East, a definite increase of anti-Soviet activities is observable. Whilst the latest disorders on the Chinese-Eastern railway have not been directly organised by the French and British Governments, these attacks on the U.S.S.R. are in any case being stimulated by them. Furthermore, the events in Afghanistan are of a quite definite character. With their customary impudence and art, the British have co-ordinated their activities with those of the Afghan reactionaries and have carried on an active struggle against the Afghan Government. The ultimate aim of that struggle is quite obvious: it consists in the advancement of the outposts of the reorganised and mechanised Anglo-Indian army to the very frontiers of the Soviet Republics.

**S**IMULTANEOUSLY a military coup-d'état has taken place in Yugo-Slavia, undoubtedly inspired from both Paris and London. The leader of Yugo-Slavia's military clique, King Alexander, was in Paris a little while before the coup; a number of European newspapers emphasise the circumstance that the crowned Fascist undoubtedly obtained the French Government's assent to his activities, otherwise he would not have resolved under any circumstance on declaring a military dictatorship immediately after his return from Paris. As for Britain, her attitude to the Yugo-Slavian coup was quite definitely revealed in the comments of the Conservative press. Three Conservative newspapers, which are far from holding unanimous opinions on all questions of international politics—the "Times," the "Daily Telegraph," and the "Morning Post,"—approved of King Alexander's activities in almost identical words. The "Times" wrote: "It is difficult to find fault with the action of King Alexander, and to imagine any other way out of the situation." The "Daily Telegraph" declared that "with few exceptions one can find no politician who does not admit the soundness of Alexander's position." And the "Morning Post" said: "Alexander could not have done anything else." And both the "Times" and the "Telegraph" emphasised immediately after the coup that one could count on the immutability of Yugo-Slavia's further foreign policy.

In this article we shall not occupy ourselves with the details and with an analysis of the fascist coup in Yugo-Slavia. It is sufficient for our purpose to take note of the circumstance that the establishment of a military dictatorship in Yugo-Slavia is a fresh demonstration of the activity of the revived Entente. From Yugo-Slavia a bridge can be thrown across to Czecho-Slovakia, where the Skoda works are situated, which according to statements in the press are about to receive fresh orders for war supplies from Yugo-Slavia.

**S**IMULTANEOUSLY the European press has been printing further communications concerning the increase of armaments of the Soviet Union's immediate neighbours. On December 21st a consignment of French arms passed through Danzig on its way to Eastern Galicia. During the first few days of January



a secret council of provincial governors was held at Lemberg, and it is impossible not to relate this to the activities of Poland's militarist and chauvinist circles, who are dreaming of Polish expansion into the Ukraine. The calling of a conference of Petlura's adherents on Polish territory in the middle of January is in accord with these plans and this mood. And the conclusion of a new Polish-Roumanian agreement for the supply of war materials has to be considered as part of the same plan.

**T**HESE military activities of the imperialists naturally demand intensified struggle with the war danger. In addition to the work of the Communist Parties, the struggle can take two lines: the first being in the direction of an international organisation of the forces in opposition to the military policy of the capitalist States, the second consisting in the activation of the Soviet Union's peace policy. For instance, the conference of the League Against Imperialism which has just been held, was faced with the question of further intensifying the struggle against the war danger. In this connection the unmasking of the hypocritical attempts of bourgeois pacifism to "raise" the problem of the war danger, which had a characteristic reflection in the activities of the pacifist congress recently held at Frankfurt-on-Main, is one of the League's most essential tasks. As for the external political activity of the Soviet Union, the first weeks of 1929 were distinguished by a fresh step on the part of the U.S.S.R. Government. The Soviet Union's proposal, addressed first and foremost to Poland, for the immediate application of the Kellogg Pact, was a genuine sensation in international politics. From the viewpoint of the bourgeois press the sensational nature of the Soviet proposal consisted first in its unexpectedness, second in its simplicity and obviousness, and third in the fact that the Soviet Government's new diplomatic move has a very interesting political content.

**T**HE Kellogg Pact, rejecting war as an instrument of national policy, was signed in Paris. The U.S.S.R. Government gave its support to this agreement, making a number of reservations, but simultaneously declaring that the U.S.S.R. was prepared to

support any project which represented the least shadow of an attempt to avoid the outbreak of war. But the support of the Kellogg Pact by the U.S.S.R. did not enter into the plans of its initiators, who were exploiting it for the purpose of further diplomatic combinations. At first every measure was resorted to to hinder the Soviet Union from participating in the agreement prohibiting war. But inasmuch as the signing of the agreement and the adherence of other States to it by no means connoted its being put into force, the capitalist politicians somewhat abated their alarm at the U.S.S.R.'s participation. In view of the ridiculous speed with which the confirmation of the Kellogg Pact was being effected, the imperialists could put aside their fear lest the Kellogg Pact should prove to be a hindrance to military activities against the U.S.S.R. The imperialist politicians had seemingly begun to reconcile themselves to the idea that in addition to the pacifist gestures of Washington and Paris, Moscow also had succeeded in demonstrating its love for peace.

**B**UT the Soviet Government in its genuinely peaceful policy, considered it essential to make a further step in the question of possibly avoiding a swift approach of war. The prospects of the Kellogg Pact being put into force as an entirety were far from rosy. And so the U.S.S.R. Government made the proposal to put the Kellogg Pact into force immediately so far as the interrelations of the Eastern-European States were concerned. The proposal which it addressed to Poland presupposes the signing of a protocol for putting into force the agreement prohibiting war, with a view to other States also attaching their signatures to the protocol in due course. The characteristic feature of the Soviet proposal consists in its not demanding any new agreement obligations from the countries bordering on the U.S.S.R., beyond those obligations which are contained in the Kellogg Pact itself. Grant that those obligations are void of content and that in the conditions of the capitalist world they cannot provide any real guarantee to the peoples against the outbreak of war, but inasmuch as such an agreement had been concluded and the U.S.S.R. has attached itself to it, it would be better for it to have effect even over a



limited area than for it not to have any effect whatever.

THAT is the essence of the Soviet proposal on the plane of the direct preservation of peace. But it is necessary to note that the Soviet proposal has not only the immediate importance of establishing albeit very relative and restricted guarantees of peace. The Soviet proposal is of political importance on another plane also. It would be unsound to ignore this circumstance. Whilst addressing itself to Poland and Lithuania, the U.S.S.R. also through them proposed to all its neighbours to agree on the rejection of settlement of conflicts by resort to military methods. This proposal applies to Roumania also. Thus the Soviet Union has made an attempt to create an entirely new situation in Eastern Europe. Each of the Soviet Union's neighbours considers itself bound to the principle of freedom of political manœuvring in connection with the seeming danger threatening them from the East. If the Soviet Union's proposal were adopted the conditions in which the foreign policies of the small States of Eastern Europe are developed would be changed considerably. At the same time, whilst the Soviet Union would be left absolutely free in the question of the fate of the Bessarabian peasantry on the territory seized by Roumania and oppressed by the Roumanian landed aristocracy, that country's acceptance of the Soviet proposal would disperse to some extent the menacing clouds of war danger hanging over this part of Europe.

This would be the extent of the positive political effect of realising the U.S.S.R.'s proposal. On the other hand, its acceptance would have the consequence of increasing the political independence of the U.S.S.R.'s neighbours, and of freeing them from their vassal dependence on the great imperialist Powers. The answer to this essential problem may simultaneously provide the answer to why Poland (and with her Roumania) has adopted a negative attitude to the Soviet proposal, and why the U.S.S.R.'s move has caused such a sensation and alarm generally in London and Paris.

As is well known, there is a military alliance between Poland and Roumania, and a military convention between Roumania and

France; there is a similar agreement between France and Poland. Of course, it is impossible to regard these agreements as anything other than component elements of the single system of military alliances which has its existence in post-war Europe. This circumstance received definite confirmation in the renewal of the Anglo-French entente in the autumn of last year. One is completely justified in assuming that in the establishment of agreement between the British and the French general staffs (which are the very backbone of the Entente) between Paris and London, the interests of France's allies were reserved. The French system of military alliances created after Versailles, both in the Balkans and in Eastern Europe, have to-day, with the revival of the Entente been formally crowned with an Anglo-French agreement. It is impossible to extract a single one of the component parts of the system without destroying the equilibrium of the whole.

OWING to their slavish dependence in fact upon the financial capital of the leading European Powers, Poland and Roumania are bound by international obligations of a military, and furthermore, of an anti-Soviet nature. The acceptance of the Soviet proposal would free them from these obligations. That is why we said above that the realisation of the U.S.S.R. proposal would strengthen the independence of policy of the present vassals of the Entente. The political sense of the Soviet proposal consists in the very fact that it is directed against the system of military alliances, headed by the Anglo-French bloc, which dominates Europe. For the selfsame reason there was considerable alarm in London and Paris over the Soviet Government's latest step. For the same reason Poland and Roumania are wriggling out of a direct answer to the U.S.S.R.'s proposal in the most impotent fashion; for Britain and France have laid their hands on the foreign policy of these States.

Furthermore, the position taken up by Poland witnesses to the fact that the European reaction is not only carefully preserving the inviolability of the system of military alliances within its present limits, but is exploiting every fresh possibility with a view to the extension of the system. It is owing to this



tendency that Poland, instead of giving a direct answer to the Soviet proposal, responded not only with a ponderous reference to the formal obstacles arising out of the Kellogg Pact, but also with superfluous suggestions as to the necessity of bringing the Baltic States into the application of the protocol, and under the direction of Poland at that. The German newspaper "Kolnische Zeitung," for January 12th remarked: "Litvinov's proposal appears to Zalesky as a last, but altogether favourable opportunity of a final establishment of a Baltic bloc."

IT is interesting to note that on this point there is an original sort of agreement between British and French interests. France is interested in the establishment of a Baltic bloc with Poland at its head, for that strengthens the entire French system of alliances directed simultaneously against Germany and against the U.S.S.R. In connection with her anti-Soviet policy, Britain has special reasons for being interested in the organisation of a united front of the Baltic States. It is significant that after the publication of the Polish answer to Litvinov's proposal the organ of the German nationalists and Prussian junkers, "Kreuz-Zeitung" devoted an alarmed article to the possibility of the creation of a Baltic bloc under Britain's general direction. The "Kreuz-Zeitung" is afraid that Germany will lose her last positions in the Baltic, and so is sounding the alarm.

THE U.S.S.R.'s new peace proposal has aroused serious counter activity in the anti-Soviet camp. Moreover, as the Soviet proposal touched on one of the basic problems of European international policy, it simultaneously served as a disclosure of the serious dangers existing to peace in Europe: dangers arising out of the existence of an organisationally formulated Franco-British bloc of States bound among themselves by military agreements.

Furthermore, the importance of the Soviet proposal consists in the impossibility of eliminating it from the agenda of international politics. In the first place, it is impossible to reject it without simultaneously and quite openly subscribing to the fact that the Kellogg Pact is considered by its very adherents as

a document completely void of serious intent. Undoubtedly that is the capitalist government's estimate of it. But not one government will resolve to reveal that position in the face of the whole world, if only because by doing so the bourgeois and social-democratic pacifist nonsense would be so completely compromised in the eyes of the masses that it would be difficult further to exploit it in the interests of the bourgeoisie.

IT is still uncertain to what tactical methods Poland and Roumania will resort in order to find a way out of the situation thus created. None the less, it is essential to note one further circumstance in order to form an estimate of the further prospects. Judging by the comments of the American press the United States is displaying a very passive attitude in regard to the Soviet proposals.

The American politicians still lack that flexibility which Great Britain has acquired in innumerable colonial struggles. And when it a question of the Soviet Union, pure class motives come to occupy the first place, and so hinder Washington from adopting a position corresponding to their interests. Consequently for the time being one can reckon on the fate of the Soviet proposal being chiefly decided independently by the Franco-British bloc. This circumstance renders it still more necessary to pay the utmost attention to the system of military alliances existing in Europe.

In the mass campaigns and personal speeches, etc., directed against the imperialist war and in defence of the Soviet Union, it is necessary that together with the general problems of the struggle against militarism, together with the definite outbreaks of war danger (Afghanistan), together with the new demonstrations of the growth of fascism (Yugo-Slavia), attention should be fixed on the slogan of struggle against the system of military alliances in Europe created by the Franco-British bloc.

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[Note: Since the above was written, it is reported by the Press that Poland and Roumania have agreed to the proposals of the U.S.S.R., and have signed the agreement.—Ed.]



# The Tenth Congress of the C.P.G.B.

THE recently concluded congress of the C.P.G.B. constitutes an important landmark in the history of the development of the British Communist movement. To this congress fell the task of summarising the results of the first attempts—timid and not always successful—to carry out the new tactical line which was clearly formulated by the E.C.C.I. Ninth Plenum, and which became a component part of the general directive of the Comintern Sixth Congress. In addition the congress was called upon, on the basis of the experience of the previous nine months, and of all the deficiencies and errors which had been manifested in the process of applying the new tactic, to provide the entire Communist Party with a clear and definite program of action.

The value of the work done by the Tenth Congress can only be realised after at least a hasty glance over the period which separates the Tenth Congress of the C.P.G.B. from the Ninth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

As is well known, the new tactical line laid down for the C.P.G.B. by the Plenum consisted in the necessity for intensifying the struggle against British imperialism, for a resolute attack on the Labour Party, which is being more and more transformed into a third party of the bourgeoisie, and for a change of attitude to the so-called Labour Government. In laying down this line the Plenum took as its basis an analysis of the changes and movements which had occurred in British economy and in the disposition of class forces in Great Britain.

The basic changes and movements in the class struggle in Britain were indicated in the first two clauses of the Ninth Plenum's resolution:

"1. The British bourgeoisie, confronted with acute international competition and chronic depression in the basic industries, will inevitably continue its policy of capitalist rationalisation, greater pressure on the working class, systematic suppression of its most class conscious section at home and its policy of colonial oppression,

and the throttling of national liberation revolutionary movements, particularly the labour and peasant movements. In foreign politics preparation for war against the U.S.S.R. will continue to be the main concern of the British bourgeoisie. The resistance of the working class to the policy of the dominant classes will cause the class struggle in Great Britain to become considerably more acute.

"2. The policy of the dominant classes of Great Britain is to strive to bring within the orbit of its influence the principal Labour organisations—the Labour Party and the trade unions, in spite of the determined resistance of the working class. The leaders of these organisations, who betrayed the general strike and the miners' fight and helped to carry through the Trade Union Bill against the resistance of the workers, are endeavouring gradually to convert their organisations into auxiliary apparatuses of the bourgeois State and the employers' organisations."

These basic assumptions have been completely confirmed. Moreover, the British have to some extent violated their own sacred tradition of "gradualness and succession," and have displayed a certain disposition to swift and strong measures in the direction of rationalisation, on the one hand, and the fusion of the machinery of the Labour movement with that of the bourgeoisie on the other.

## CONGRESSES OF THE LABOUR PARTY AND T.U.C.

The Ninth Plenum was followed by the Labour Party Conference and the Trades Union Congress. The Labour Party Conference adopted a program which even Wheatley of the so-called "Independent Labour Party" characterised as a program of capitalist rationalisation. This program was complemented by a resolution on loyalty, which has as its object to make capitalist rationalisation the obligation of all and every trade union



member. At their own congress, which preceded the Labour Party Conference, the trade union bureaucrats subscribed in advance to this program of capitalist rationalisation. In quiet, business-like terms, and without the elegant phraseology with which MacDonald customarily decks out his servile service to the bourgeoisie, the General Council formulated its capitalistic credo in terms allowing of no false interpretation:

"Broadly speaking, there were three possible lines of policy open to the trade union movement," we read in the General Council Report to the Sixtieth Annual Trades Union Congress, page 209. What were these three possibilities? The first consists in a resolute revolutionary struggle against capitalism. "That policy," the General Council declares, "the trade union movement has decisively rejected as futile, certain to fail, and sure to lead to bloodshed and misery." The second consists in at least continuing the policy of partial strikes with the object of improving the workers' economic situation. But the General Council says: "The objections to this course are that it is entirely inconsistent with the modern demand for a completely altered status of the workers in industry." And so there remains the third possibility: "For the trade union movement to say boldly that not only is it concerned with the prosperity of industry, but that it is going to have a voice as to the way industry is carried on, so that it can influence the new developments that are taking place." And, later on, the same General Council announces that it will make every effort to assist in the scientific reorganisation of industry, to render it more effective, and so on.

Such is the credo of the General Council, and it is in conformity with the program of the Labour Party. And if we turn to the activities of the leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions we see that they are in fact straining all their powers in order to participate actively in the work of rationalising British capitalism.

#### REFORMISM AND RATIONALISATION

One has to add to the above that British reformism is definitely playing a much more active and important role in the salvation of

British imperialism from stagnation and putrefaction than is reformism in other countries. Owing to the number of historical causes, and first and foremost owing to the fact that the ruling classes of Britain are corrupted by an age-old monopoly, capitalist rationalisation in Britain is being effected much more slowly and lumberingly. The rationalisers are setting their main hopes on the enormous apparatus of the Labour movement controlled by the trade union officials, expecting with the aid of the latter to carry through the rationalisation process as painlessly as possible and to effect it mainly (not to say exclusively) at the cost of the intensification of exploitation of the worker masses. It is very characteristic that in Britain, where so far capitalist rationalisation cannot boast of any special successes, the reverse side of rationalisation is revealed much more definitely than in Germany or the United States, for instance. Even the capitalist press is forced to admit that a number of areas, especially and chiefly South Wales, are suffering cruelly from rationalisation, and that in these areas the bitterest poverty reigns supreme.

Needless to say, such a situation imposes fresh difficult tasks on the Communist Party, which is called upon to act as the bold leader of the proletarian masses against the capitalist oppressors who are operating directly with the aid of the apparatus which has been created by the efforts of the leading workers during many generations. The whole purport of the tactical directives of the E.C.C.I. Ninth Plenum consisted in the Communist Party ceasing to constitute a left wing of the Labour Party, and in its assuming the role of an independent leader of the battles of the working class.

By all its past, and in particular by its role during the general strike and the miners' lock-out, the numerically small Communist Party of Great Britain has been prepared for the fulfilment of this role. At the same time, there is no doubt that the opposition forthcoming to this new tactical line, after it had been laid down by the Comintern, had as its consequence a weakening of the position of the C.P. and a strengthening of the position of reformism, which exploited the results of the defeat of the miners in order on the one hand to assist in the work of capitalist



rationalisation, and on the other to participate actively in the crusade against the Communists and all the revolutionary proletariat.

#### THE C.P.G.B. AND THE NEW LINE

After the E.C.C.I. Ninth Plenum the Communist Party of Great Britain accepted the new tactical course in principle. But it is one thing theoretically to accept a new tactical direction, and another to transform the new tactical line into life. Old habits weighed heavily on the British C.P. Moreover parliamentary cretinism which is especially strong in the land of the "mother of parliaments," had as its consequence a peculiar, constricted interpretation of the Ninth Plenum's tactical line. Many British Communists assumed that the new tactical line had reference mainly (not to say exclusively) to the realm of parliamentary tactics, to the question of election manoeuvres, to the tasks of putting up their own candidates against those of the Labour Party. Instead of a pure, fresh tactical line, with a single thread running through it, the result was timid zigzags, which not merely did not strengthen the Party but deprived it of the fruits of the new tactical course.

The absence of a clear and clean line was revealed particularly in the question of the attitude to the so-called left wing. The "left" reformists of the I.L.P. felt the approach of the moment when the depression would begin to turn to a storm of dissatisfaction with the old reformist leadership. In order to direct this dissatisfaction into the channels of official reformism, they took on themselves the initiative of creating a pseudo "left wing" movement under the banner of a "socialist revival." The Communist Party's duty was by a stern and resolute criticism to unmask this typical and customary manoeuvre of the "left" reformists to do all in their power to take control of the incipient revival. Instead of doing so the Party endeavoured to assist the movement, not by severe and open criticism of the "left" leaders, but by counsel and active assistance to those leaders.

The absence of a consequential and clear line was revealed in the question of the trade unions also. We have already remarked that the whole circumstance of the rationalisation of British imperialism is emphasising the role and importance of the trade unions. The

whole task of the General Council and the leaders of the Labour Party amounts to their drawing the workers' attention away from the direct struggle for the amelioration of their position, by promises of all those blessings which rationalisation will bring in the future, and all those reforms which the MacDonald Government will bring into effect when it receives the majority of votes at the general election. In the present economic conditions the work of preparing, organising and leading the economic battles is one of the most important tasks of the Communist Party. The history of the British workers' movement convincingly shows that even in the past when the capitalist crisis had not taken on such clearcut outlines, and when there was no Communist Party in the arena, the so-called unofficial strikes, i.e., strikes carried out by the workers against the will of the officials, played an enormous part. The official historians of the British trade union movement, the Webbs, naturally pass over in silence the creative forces of the British proletariat in order to exaggerate the role of the trade union officials. But even the Webbs are unable entirely to hide the facts, which show that the most important movements of the British proletarians developed out of the so-called unofficial strikes. And that mass creativeness has a much greater role to play in the struggle against the trade union officials at the present time, in this period of the decline of capitalism, when the trade union officials are openly acting as the lackeys of Mond. None the less, it has to be realised that in the trade union sphere also, particularly in relation to Cook and Cookism, the Communist Party of Great Britain has not taken up an unequivocal position corresponding with the general spirit of the resolution passed by the Ninth Plenum.

Naturally, the chief task of the Tenth Congress consisted in subjecting the errors committed in the past to a critical analysis, and in adopting all measures necessary in order to correct those errors in the future. However, we have not yet had the opportunity to summarise the final results of the congress, and we shall return to this question when we receive the complete text of the resolutions adopted.



## DISCUSSION BEFORE THE CONGRESS

Considerably more preparation was made for the Tenth Congress than for any previous congress of the Communist Party in Britain. The pre-congress discussion was opened in the pages of the "Workers' Life" as early as October 12th, i.e., three and a half months before the congress. It is true that the discussion, at least in its initial stages, did not receive adequate preparation and bore rather a fortuitous character. At the same time, even during this preliminary stage the discussion conduced to a quickening of the Party life and an intensification of the activity of the Party members. Beginning with November, the discussion took on a more co-ordinatedly planned character, and to a large extent it was concentrated on the theses and decisions of the Central Committee, which were published partly in the Party's theoretical journal and partly in "Workers' Life."

A detailed analysis of the discussion shows that the number of adherents to a return to the old tactic condemned by the Ninth Plenum was insignificant by comparison with the Party membership. The situation was worse in regard to the interpretation of the new tactical line and the question of the methods of its application and realisation in practice. Among those who participated in the discussion, in addition to those comrades who formally defended the new tactic, but in reality wandered on to the old, there were also others who interpreted the idea of a resolute struggle against the Labour Party in the spirit of a narrow sectarianism, in the spirit of an abandonment of all struggle to win the masses which are under the influence of the reformists both in the trade unions and in the Labour Party. In the course of the discussion and at the congress itself the arguments centred around two questions: that of the left wing and that of the political levies, and it is necessary to consider these in somewhat more detail.

Before we deal with them, however, it is necessary to say a few words on the question of entry into the Labour Party. The Ninth Plenum resolution says: "It is inexpedient as yet to abandon the slogan of affiliation to the Labour Party, as the latter has not yet definitely and completely become transformed into a social-democratic party in organisational structure. The fight for affiliation however,

must be converted into an offensive fight against the treacherous leadership of the Labour Party."

This paragraph received an unsympathetic welcome from a certain section of the British C.P., which section assumed that it was necessary to renounce the slogan of membership of the Labour Party at once, in order to facilitate the putting of the new tactical line into practice. After the Labour Party Birmingham Conference this question naturally dropped. It went without saying that in view of the new program for capitalist rationalisation, strengthened further by the loyalty resolution, the slogan of affiliation to the Labour Party dropped entirely. The Central Committee resolved the problem in this sense after the Labour Party Birmingham Conference, and their resolution was carried by the congress. But that is not the point. It has to be noted and emphasised that unfortunately even before the Birmingham Conference, the Communist Party put forth no efforts whatever to carry out an offensive struggle against the right leadership whilst maintaining their old slogan of affiliation to the Labour Party. Even worse, at the Miners' Conference in South Wales the struggle for affiliation to the Labour Party was carried on essentially in the spirit of the old tactical line. The absence of an offensive line threw into relief the inertia of the old tactic, which through its reaction evoked the opposite type of error. But now to turn to those disputed issues which particularly agitated the congress.

## CONGRESS DISCUSSION

We begin with the left wing question. We have already remarked that there was an absence of clarity and restraint in the C.P. tactic on this issue. But the discussion centred not so much around the question of attitude to the so-called "left wing" in the ranks of the Labour Party and the I.L.P., as around the question of the attitude to the "National Left Wing Movement." This movement was created by the efforts of the Communists immediately following the Liverpool Conference of the Labour Party, which declared war on the Communists. Many comrades expressed a fear that this "national left wing organisation," despite the fact that it was under the leadership of the Communist Party, might be



transformed from being a weapon of struggle against the Labour Party into a barrier between the Communist Party and the leftward moving workers. In reality the national left wing movement has given reason for such a fear. This movement had its own machinery, its own program and very frequently acted as an organisation striving to transform itself into a centrist party between the Labour Party and the Communist Party. Furthermore, quite a strong opposition to the left wing existed in the ranks of the C.P. itself, this opposition struggling also for the trade union Minority Movement to be transformed into an all-embracing movement of the left wing workers both in the trade unions and in the Labour Party, i.e., for it to swallow up the National Left Wing Movement as well.

After long debates, the congress came to the conclusion, by 55 votes to 52, that it was necessary to stop assisting the present national left wing committee, and to strengthen the work in the local organisations, organising on the principle of a united front from below.

We shall return to this question when we receive the complete text of the resolutions; meantime, however, it is necessary to emphasise that by its origin, its composition, its basic tasks, the "National Left Wing Movement" cannot be evaluated as a centrist, left-social-democratic organisation. Only under an unsound leadership could these organisations take that road. The chief mission of the so-called left social-democrats consists in restraining the left workers who are becoming emancipated from the influence of the reformists, and keeping them under a general reformist leadership. The national left wing in Britain was persecuted by all the reformist organisations, it acted against them, and represented not only the organisation of a united front with the Communists but an organisation coming directly under Communist leadership. But the errors committed by the C.P. in regard to the left wing movement generally and to the National Left Wing Movement in particular created such a situation that definite changes were imperatively necessary. Needless to say, the trouble does not lie in the fact that in future the energy of the Party will in accordance with the congress decision be concentrated on assistance to the local organisations of left wingers.

None the less, the question of the methods of uniting the left wing groups also demands a decision.

Among the disputed issues was that of the trade union political levies. In the ranks of the C.C. and also among the delegates of certain Party Conferences which were held previous to the congress, were comrades who made a strong attack on the continuation of political levy payments. On this issue the resolution of the Ninth Plenum did not adopt that view, but made the continuation of payment conditional on a change in its assignation. It reads: "An energetic campaign must be organised in the local trade union branches for local control of the expenditure of the political levy, in order that it may be possible to finance any candidates the rank and file of the branch may approve." There were comrades who assumed that this proposal was out-of-date, that the political levy went essentially to strengthen the same Labour Party against which we had to concentrate all our efforts.

The discussion itself was still more complicated by the fact that the defenders of the Ninth Plenum resolution on the political levy resorted to arguments which were in flagrant contradiction to the general line of the Ninth Plenum. In the course of this discussion, in an article "Questions before the Party Congress," printed in the "Communist Review" for January, R. P. Dutt gave a correct answer to these comrades in the following words, which formulate our tactic in regard to the political levy: "Our opposition is in reality to the handing over of the political levy to the Labour Party and its purposes, but not to the political levy itself. We need to concentrate our agitation against the misdirection of the political fund of the unions to the Labour Party, which does not represent the workers, but serves the capitalists." Unfortunately not all the comrades were able to acquire a clear understanding of the difference between the political levy as such and the methods of using it at the present time. The congress declared itself in favour of the continuation of the political levy by a great majority (100 to 22) and also stated the necessity for a tense and resolute struggle for the right of controlling the political levies by the local organisations.



In the course of the discussion the preliminary agenda as drawn up by the C.C. was enlarged by the addition of one further question: that of the struggle in the colonies against British imperialism. On the colonial problem two resolutions were adopted. In the first the Party adhered wholly and entirely to the theses of the Sixth World Congress and pledged itself to correct those errors which were noted in the theses of the Sixth Congress (inadequate assistance to the revolutionary movement in the colonies and semi-colonies). At the same time the congress adopted a resolution in which the Party pledged itself to regard the work of assisting the revolutionary struggle in the colonies and semi-colonies as one of its most important tasks.

We have noted only certain of the decisions of the congress, and we shall have to deal

with the subject again. On comparing the theses put forward by the Central Committee with the resolutions passed by the congress itself, we come to the conviction that the congress took a big step forward in the struggle against those right tendencies which first dictated a negative attitude to the new tactical line and subsequently hindered a swift and successful application of the new tactic. The congress made a serious attempt to apply the basic decisions of the Comintern Sixth Congress to British conditions. But it goes without saying that these decisions will be of value only if the entire Party as a whole continues a stubborn struggle on the basis of the Sixth Congress decisions against all forms of opportunist tendency in its own ranks, overcoming them by a brave self-criticism and a resolute struggle for the line of the Communist International.

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# Luxemburg to Lenin or Luxemburg to Kautsky?

By A. Martinov

THE Brandlerites, who never were true Leninists, who in the main remained old "left-radicals" within the ranks of the Communist Party, have now, under the cloak of conciliators, passed to an open attack on the Party. Under what flag? Not, of course, under the flag of 1923—that would bring them no laurels; after the Saxon "experiment" they had to save themselves from the anger of the Communist proletariat of Germany by flight to Moscow. They have raised a revolt against the German Communist Party under the "Spartacus" banner. But by the irony of fate they have dragged out this old, honourable standard of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg at the very moment when in reality they are betraying that flag, when they are renouncing the revolutionary heritage of Rosa Luxemburg, and renouncing all that was revolutionary in that heritage, when they are taking to the centrist road.

## PRE-WAR SITUATION IN GERMANY

The situation in Germany during the years preceding the world war had many points of similarity with the present situation. During the four years preceding the war there occurred a final crystallisation of the centrist trend under Kautsky's leadership in German social-democracy, and from that time on there was no cessation to the struggle between him and the "left-radical" trend, headed by Rosa Luxemburg, to which, by the way, both Radek and Brandler adhered. In his book: "The Political Mass Strike," Kautsky wrote: "That which is now called the 'Marxist Centre' had its first formulation at the Magdeburg Party Congress of 1910. From the Hanover Party Congress of 1899 onwards, the majority of the Congress was always opposed to the reformist impatience of the State-thinking opportunists. From 1910 onwards the majority of every Party Congress is also against revolutionary impatience, against the extreme lefts.

This has now become a rule. On the other hand, from that time on there are also Party Congresses which find no reason whatever for attacking the rights."

Over what issues was the struggle between the "left-radicals" and the centrists at that time? It is highly significant that the struggle raged over the same two issues which are now the subject of struggle between the German C.P. and the right schismatics; issues which now, at the present stage of the proletarian revolution, have acquired especially stern significance. They are, first: Attack or defence? second: Is emphasis to be placed on the unorganised masses or purely on the masses organised in trade unions? And it is highly significant that the Brandlerites, the former "left-radicals," the former Luxemburgites and Spartacists, now occupy on both these questions the same position that Kautsky occupied on the eve of the world war, and have remained faithful to Luxemburg only in those weak features which distinguished her from Leninism. And the "new strategy" of Rosa Luxemburg and the left-radicals generally of those days is now being defended, in its highly perfected, supreme form of Leninism, by the German C.P. and its Central Committee.

At the present moment it would appear to be very useful to recall to mind the history of the struggle between Luxemburg and Kautsky, between the left-radicals and the centrists, on the eve of the world war. Not only because that history illumines the extent of the Brandlerites' present decline, but also because it sheds light on the most actual, the most burning problems of the present-day German workers' movement. In the light of that history it becomes absolutely clear that at the present moment, when the Party is directly confronted with the problem of the struggle for power, there is no longer room in Germany for Luxemburgism. From Luxemburgism opened two divergent roads:



either back to centrism, i.e., to social-democracy (the road which the Brandlerites began to traverse in 1923 and to which they are now finally committed) or forward to Leninism: the road which the German C.P. and its Central Committee followed and is still successfully travelling.

We said above that during the years immediately prior to the war the situation in Germany had many points of similarity with the situation at the present moment: the situation of intensified class antagonisms, and the eve of a new imminent war. The defeat of the Russian 1905 revolution, and the beginning of the Stolypin era coincided with the crowning of a period of vigorous development for capitalism in Germany: a period which lasted from 1895 down to 1907. In Western Europe and in Germany, especially from 1907 onwards, there was ushered in a period of intensifying external and internal antagonisms on the basis of the protracted favourable economic situation. Imperialism entered upon the period of rapid development. The trustification of capital proceeded at full speed. Protectionism and the growth of prices for agricultural produce raised the cost of living from year to year. The old type of purely economic local strikes had proved impotent, and strikes began to suffer systematic defeat in face of strongly organised and attacking capital. Together with this the international antagonisms were intensified to the extreme, everywhere a frenzied armaments race was going on, and the catastrophe of world war was very clearly approaching. This, equally with the incendiary example of the Russian 1905 revolution, evoked a leftward movement in the working class. Under the influence of the increase of agitation among the proletariat and the attack of the reaction from above, the German social-democracy raised for the first time the issue of the applicability in principle of the mass political strike as a method of struggle, and this question was answered affirmatively at the Jena Party Congress of 1905—albeit only with application to the case of an attack on universal suffrage. In 1911 for the first time after long years of stagnation enormous mass strikes broke out in Britain. The same was true of Sweden. And

in Russia after the Lena shootings a violent development of the strike movement and of street demonstrations set in.

#### A NECESSARY CHANGE IN TACTICS

In these conditions of an intensification of capitalism's antagonisms and of a swift approach of a period of wars and revolutions, the necessity of changing the old tactics of social-democracy was evident; but, as the French proverb says: "Death carries off the living." Half a century of peaceful, legal activity in the situation of a firm stabilisation of capitalism had eliminated the revolutionary spirit from German social-democracy, and especially from the German trade unions uniting the labour aristocracy and guided by narrow-minded and self-satisfied trade union bureaucrats. The German unions became a bulwark of reformism in the German Labour movement. At the beginning of the present century, when revisionism had ideologically suffered defeat, the trade union leaders began to demand that the trade unions created by German social-democracy and permeated with its spirit, should be transformed into organisations politically "neutral," i.e., politically independent of social-democracy. This idea of the political neutralisation of the trade unions was never realised. It was removed from the agenda, not because the trade union leaders had corrected their attitude, but because German social-democracy had in practice capitulated to them. In 1905 a conflict arose between social-democracy and the trade unions. The Jena Party Congress decided that in the event of an attempt to get rid of universal suffrage German social-democracy should resort to a mass political strike. In the very same year the Cologne trade union congress imposed a ban on propaganda in favour of a mass strike. This conflict was very quickly settled in favour of the trade unions. When at the Mannheim Party Congress of 1906 the question arose of a general strike in answer to the preparations being made for Germany's intervention in revolutionary Russia, the proposal to this effect was turned down. Bebel adduced two arguments against it: in the first place, in any case an isolated Germany would not intervene in that manner; and secondly, even if she did German social-democracy would be helpless to interfere in such a business, for



"then warships would settle the question." At the same Mannheim Party Congress a resolution was passed declaring that there was no antagonism between the resolution of the Cologne trade union congress and the resolution of the Jena Party Congress on the mass strike, and that if the C.C. of the German social-democratic party deemed it necessary to resort to a mass political strike it should do so in agreement with the General Commission of the trade unions. Finally, at the same Congress the "equality" of the trade unions and the Party was fixed, and a resolution put forward by Kautsky, which spoke of the necessity for the spirit of social-democracy to dominate in the trade union movement, and of the consequent necessity for every member of the Party to regard himself as bound by the decisions of the Party Congresses in his work in the trade unions, was turned down. It was clear that in order to establish the "new strategy" which all the new internal and international situations imperatively dictated, it was necessary to break the opposition of the rising spirit of reformism, and especially the frenzied opposition of the trade union bureaucrats, who were the chief bulwark of opportunism. In Germany the "left-radicals" with Rosa Luxemburg at their head set themselves this task, and Rosa Luxemburg herself carried on an energetic propaganda for the fertilising of the German workers' movement with the experience of the Russian 1905 revolution. This comprised her greatest historical service. Rosa Luxemburg raised the question of the application of mass strikes in Germany, in accordance with the experience of the Russian revolution. This she did first in 1906, in her pamphlet "The Mass Strike, the Party and the Trade Unions," where the question was raised in a propagandist form, and later in 1910, in connection with the campaign for the conquest of universal suffrage in Prussia, when she raised the question in its practical applications in a number of articles: "What next?", "Attrition or Struggle?", "Theory and Practice," and so on, and in many speeches. In this connection we shall give a short exposition of Rosa Luxemburg's ideas, new to German social-democracy at that time, which had a revolutionising effect on the party masses, and drove them along the road of revolution. Later on, in another connection,

we shall have to deal with the weak sides of Rosa Luxemburg's arguments and strategic line, and with her errors.

#### ROSA LUXEMBURG'S ATTITUDE

In her first pamphlet, written in 1906, Rosa Luxemburg explained on the basis of the experience of the Russian revolution, that partial, separate strikes with objectives restricted to sternly defined, immediately practical aims, and also the strict demarcation between purely economic strikes on the one hand and political action on the other, are all the product of the peaceful period of the workers' movement; and that on the contrary in a revolutionary situation, strikes in the first place are transformed into a strike wave extending throughout a "whole period," possibly for years, and that secondly, in a revolutionary situation, economic and political strikes or other political actions are closely interlocked one with another: the economic strike is transformed into a political strike, and on the other hand a political strike or other political demonstration unlooses the economic struggle of millions of workers, and serves as the strongest of stimuli to the organisation of the unorganised. Thus, the mass strike is "a form of the proletarian mass movement, a form of manifestation of the proletarian struggle in the revolution." (Rosa Luxemburg, *Collected Works*, vol. 4, p. 438.)

Further, Rosa Luxemburg struggles against the widespread prejudice that the experience of the Russian revolution is not applicable to Western Europe, especially not to Germany: a prejudice which at the present time also is so characteristic of the social-democrats and the communist renegades. The Russian revolution, she says, is still a bourgeois revolution, but the proletariat, and the proletariat of the large centralised industry at that, is playing so great a role in that revolution that the latter is destined to be a prologue and to a certain extent the prototype of the proletarian revolutions in Western Europe. It is said that the unbroken, incessant elemental strike movement during the Russian revolution is explained by the fact that within the framework of the tsarist autocracy the Russian proletariat was afforded



no possibility of creating itself a strong trade union organisation, and by the fact that its level of existence is extremely low. But, she says, are there then no enormous masses of still unorganised workers in Germany, with a low wage-level—the miners for example, or the textile workers, the agricultural labourers, and, finally, the workers in the State enterprises, who are in practice deprived of the right of combination? And whilst the wages in Germany are higher than in Russia, the productivity of labour is still incommensurably higher, and consequently the rate of exploitation is also higher. It is said that the violent, elemental development of the workers' movement in Russia is explained by the fact that the working class of that country has been deprived of all political rights, and that it was confronted with the task of overthrowing the tsarist autocracy; whilst in Germany there is at any rate a certain right of combination; the German proletariat can utilise their parliamentary rights on the basis of universal suffrage. That is so, says Rosa Luxemburg, but it does not follow that the German proletariat will not have to make a still higher jump than that of the Russian proletariat. For if the enormous proletarian mass of Germany begins to move, it is at once faced with the problem of conquest of power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat; in other words, the stakes of the proletariat in Germany will be no lower, but even higher, than in Russia.

In this connection Rosa Luxemburg criticises the opinion which restricts the aim of a mass strike to the defence of universal suffrage in Germany, or the achievement of universal suffrage in Prussia. In Germany, she says, the mass strike cannot stop at a defensive position, cannot restrict itself to the task of defending suffrage laws. In accordance with this it cannot be strictly limited to political action, leaving out the social-economic tasks: "If we desired our Prussian movement for universal suffrage to be carried on in the spirit of bourgeois liberalism and in alliance with that liberalism, as a political struggle for the constitution, then of course any delimitation of that movement from economic struggles with capitalism would be permissible." ("Attrition or Struggle," in "Neue Zeit," 1910, 2nd vol.) Starting from the assumption that in

Germany also the mass strikes must be transformed into the struggle for power, Rosa Luxemburg also raises the question of the republic—a slogan which for opportunist reasons the German social-democratic party had long since forgotten, as Friedrich Engels had previously pointed out.

#### KAUTSKY AND LUXEMBURG

As we have said, in 1906 Rosa Luxemburg raised the question of the mass strike in its propagandist aspect. In 1910, when the campaign for universal suffrage in Prussia had developed and when in connection with that campaign mass street demonstrations were being carried out with great success and enthusiasm throughout all Prussia, Rosa Luxemburg raised the question of the mass strike in its practical aspect, as an immediate task of the moment. The party, with its three million electors behind it, said Luxemburg, is confronted with a dilemma. "Either forward at all cost, or the mass action which has been begun will fruitlessly suffer defeat." "Mass demonstrations have their own logic and psychology, which politicians who wish to direct them are obliged to take into account. The manifestation of mass will in the political struggle cannot be artificially maintained for any length of time at one and the same level, cannot be fettered in one and the same form. It must grow, intensify, take on fresh and more active forms. Once it has developed the mass action must go forward, and if the directing party at the given moment does not possess the resolution to give the masses the necessary parole, the masses will inevitably be possessed by a certain disillusionment, the ardour will vanish, and the action will suffer defeat." (See "Neue Zeit," 1910, vol. 2, p. 69.)

Such was the new, revolutionary strategy which Rosa Luxemburg recommended to the party. When she raised the question of a mass strike on the propaganda plane in 1906, she could still to some extent go hand in hand with Kautsky. Under the influence of the Russian revolution Kautsky had taken up a very radical position on the Russian issue, wavering between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks; but towards the end he occupied a position very close to that of the latter, and



even as late as 1909 published his book, the "Road to Power," written in the spirit of revolutionary Marxism. But Kautsky was radically minded only so long as the waves of revolution flowed beyond the frontiers of Germany, on the other side of the East-Prussian border. But when, in connection with the developing struggle for universal suffrage in Prussia and with the street demonstrations, the direct question of an immediate transfer to resolute revolutionary methods at home and of an immediate transfer to mass political strikes, albeit elementarily in the form of "demonstrative" strikes arose, Kautsky's revolutionary fervour at once died down; he at once revealed himself as a philistine of the purest water, and at once jointly with the right wing of the party and the trade union bureaucracy he launched an attack on Rosa Luxemburg and the other "left-radicals." The centrist movement in German social-democracy was consolidated from that moment, and Kautsky became its theoretical leader. Kautsky threw himself into the fray against Rosa Luxemburg with two series of articles. In 1910 he wrote a number of articles in defence of the defensive tactic and against the offensive tactic. In 1911 he wrote a second series of articles against emphasis being laid on the elemental movement of the unorganised masses.

The first series consisted of "What Now?," "The New Strategy," "Between Baden and Luxemburg," and "Conclusion." In these articles did Kautsky deny that revolutionary prospects were opening before Germany? By no means. In this regard he remained faithful to what he had written in "Road to Power." And his very *raison d'être* as a centrist was to conceal opportunism under revolutionary phraseology and thus to lull the working class to sleep. But whilst devoting three whole pages in his article "What Now?" to the theme that an intensification of the antagonisms was going on in Germany, he did not thence make the deduction that the tactics of the party had to be revolutionised accordingly, but that it was accordingly all the more necessary to keep to the old tactic and "not allow ourselves to be provoked," leaving history to work for us "itself," until the fruit was so ripe that it would itself fall from the tree. In these articles Kautsky developed a new theory,

borrowed by him from Delbrück's book on "The History of the Military Art." "The military art," he said, "knows two forms of strategy; that of overthrowing the enemy and that of taking him by attrition; in other words, the strategy of militant attack and the strategy of defence and a petty trench warfare. From the French revolution to the Paris Commune inclusive the proletarian and other revolutionary classes applied the strategy of militant attack. After the Paris Commune the situation changed, and changed especially in Germany. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of militarism on the one hand, and to the fact that the German proletariat has won rights of combination and universal suffrage on the other, beginning from the seventies down to the present time, German social-democracy has applied exclusively the strategy of taking the enemy by attrition, the strategy of the Roman senator Fabius Maximus Cunctator; and thanks to that strategy it has gone from success to success. We should have to renounce that strategy if the application of the old tactic began to disintegrate the ranks of our own army. But that is not so [In other words, Kautsky has not noticed this elephant!]. Before us brilliant prospects still open out along the road. If at the 1911 elections we succeeded in making such a jump as we made in 1890 (and the situation is very promising), in other words, if we succeeded in doubling our votes, we could win the majority of all the votes cast." "The key to this mighty historical situation, the key to a crushing victory at the next elections to the Reichstag is already in our own pockets, if we can judge by the general disposition of affairs. Only one factor might assist towards our losing the key, and towards our letting slip this brilliant situation: lack of intelligence on our part." And when the miracle promised by Kautsky, the winning of the majority of votes in the Reichstag at the next elections, was achieved, then, said he, would come the critical decisive moment, then either the ruling classes would be forced to resort to an armed coup d'état, or, what is most probable, they would lose their head. And then in answer to the coup d'état we could raise the issue of a mass strike, and that in the Belgian, and not in the Russian fashion. (Kautsky, "What Next?" "Die Neue Zeit,"



1910, 2nd vol., p.77-78.) Until that moment we ought to direct all our attention to the future elections to the Reichstag. "In the given political circumstances it would be difficult to find any method except a triumphant mass demonstration which could have such enormous moral influence as a great victory at the elections. . . There are few successes which would so irrefragably demonstrate to the masses our growing strength as would a victory at the elections, as would the capture of further seats." (Kautsky, "The New Strategy," *ibid.*, 1910, vol. 2, p. 419.) Thus the ex-radical Kautsky had in fact as early as 1911 removed from the agenda the question of the struggle for conquest of universal suffrage in the Prussian Landtag, inasmuch as it was possible to obtain the victory there only by revolutionary methods, and was striving to turn the attention of the working masses away from that issue to the coming elections to the Reichstag. To this end he on the one hand spread among the masses the illusion that it would be possible to win a majority of votes at those elections, and on the other he developed the parliamentary cretinist theory that "the conquest of seats is the highest testimony to power."

#### KAUTSKY AND THE MASSES

In connection with the question of mass strikes Rosa Luxemburg raised the question of the role of the elemental movement of the unorganised masses in a revolutionary situation. "When in Germany the issue reaches the point of mass strikes," she wrote, "then almost certainly not the better organised, not the printers, but the worse organised or the completely unorganised, the miners, the textile workers, and possibly even the agricultural labourers, will develop the maximum ability to act." (Luxemburg, *Collected Works*, vol. 4, p. 456.) And on this issue Kautsky threw himself on the left-radicals in 1911 in a series of articles entitled "The Action of the Masses." In these articles, Kautsky does not exclude the possibility that in Germany also in a revolutionary situation the elemental unorganised masses will come on the scene. But he experiences a purely Philistine fear of that mass, and seeks by all means to persuade the party not to touch that mass, not to appeal to it, so long as the thun-

derstorm does not burst. First and foremost he seeks to give a professorial objective characterisation of the "mass"; in his estimate of the elemental movement of the mass he endeavours to occupy the position of the "golden mean" between the junker writers who evaluate the unorganised mass in movement as an unbridled fury, and the "left-radicals" who set great hopes in its revolutionary creativeness. "When such masses come into action," he writes, "they inevitably display their ignorance and absence of consciousness. But even if we were faced with such a strange situation as one in which it would be possible to instil into the mass a clear understanding of social relationships, given a simultaneous impossibility of organising it, the action of that mass would be confined to destruction, not, of course, in the physical, but in the social sense of the word—the destruction of institutions." (See Kautsky's collection of articles: "The Political Mass Strike," Berlin, 1914, pp. 262-263.) Taking further his analysis of the various historical manifestations of the elemental movement of the mass, Kautsky says: "We see that the action of the mass is not always a service to progress. That which it destroys is not always the greatest obstacle to development. Wherever it has been victorious it has as frequently assisted the reactionary elements to seat themselves in the saddle as it has the revolutionary elements. This implies a second defect, always associated with the action of the mass: it can be victorious truly, under certain conditions, but it can never itself exploit the fruits of victory, for it is capable only of destruction." (*Ibid.*: p. 266.)

According to Kautsky a second defect of the movement of the unorganised masses consists in the following: "The coming of the unorganised mass into action is an elemental phenomenon, which, when its prerequisites are known, can with a certain probability be expected at a period when those prerequisites are present, but which cannot be arbitrarily evoked, and which also it is impossible previously to fix quite definitely at a certain moment." (*Ibid.*: p. 267.) Summarising all this, Kautsky realises with satisfaction that hitherto the German social-democracy has fortunately not had to have anything to do with this unpleasant and mysterious stranger. "It



is not so easy to arouse the German proletariat to unorganised mass attacks as it is to arouse the proletariat of other nations. And this has in no small degree to be ascribed to the fact that the growth and rise of our Party has so far not once been interrupted by a decisive defeat for any length of time, as has been the case in one instance or another in the socialist movements of other large States." (Ibid.)

When the Philistine Kautsky wrote these lines in 1911, he did not foresee that within three years, on the declaration of war, it would be the very trade union and political organisations of the German proletariat that would bring him the greatest of defeats, and that within a further three years, in 1918, it would be the unorganised mass which despite the social-democracy and its trade unions, would sweep away all the German thrones, and strike thirty crowns from the heads of the German great and petty monarchs and ruling princes.

In the two series of articles we have analysed Kautsky reveals the greatest terror of the mass and of its elemental movement, but he cannot deny that the situation was such that the possibility of an elemental outbreak of the masses even in Germany in the more or less immediate future was not excluded. In connection with this prospect, at the end of his articles he wrote: "The more that extensive and elemental mass actions again began to play an historical role, the more would an element begin to act in our political life which was completely insusceptible of estimate, which would bring us the greatest of surprises, of both a pleasant and unpleasant nature. Development would again assume a catastrophic character, as was the case in Europe from 1789 to 1871. Whether we liked it or not, that would not alter the affair in the least. . . . But out of the special features of the situation does the necessity of applying a special new tactic arise? Certain of our friends declare that it does. They desire to revise our tactic." Kautsky does not agree, and says: "In regard to such phenomena there is nothing other to be done than to think, so that it should not find us completely unprepared. Thus we shall prove the more able to dominate the situation, and at any moment we can act the more expediently, the stronger

and more ready for action our organisation, the clearer our understanding, and so on." "Those tactical tasks which we can and must set ourselves to-day imply a new tactic least of all. They imply a continuation and consolidation of the tactic which for more than forty years has led our Party from victory to victory." (Ibid: pp. 280-281.)

So the elemental mass movement in the present situation may, and probably even will come on the historical scene. But despite that, we must adopt a passive attitude to the unorganised mass at the moment, hiding our head in the sand like the ostrich, and continuing to go about our daily avocations so long as the thunderstorm does not break. Such is the last word of wisdom of the Philistine Kautsky. In entering into a coalition with the rights against the "left-radicals," Kautsky consoled himself with the hope that the application of the old tactic in the new radically changed historical situation would guarantee further victories to social-democracy. In reality, as we know, it only guaranteed the complete triumph of reformism in the German social-democracy and prepared the ground for its contemptible capitulation to the bourgeoisie in 1914.

#### THE NEW KAUTSKIANS

To-day, in a situation reminiscent in much of the situation in 1910-1914, above outlined, but a situation having as background the period of the world proletarian revolution, to-day when class antagonisms are intensifying in Germany, when the wave of the workers' movement is rising, when the reformist trade union leaders and the social-democratic party have finally become the agents of the bourgeoisie and are betraying the working class at every step, when the danger of war is again imminent, when the German Communist Party and the Comintern, faced with the growing antagonisms of capitalism, have laid down a new strategetic plan, as did the "left-radicals" in 1910—at such a time the Brandlerites, forgetting their own historical past, forgetting all the history of the terrible decline of social-democracy during the bygone years of war and revolution, have taken up the same position as that occupied by the Kautskyites on the eve of the world war.

They, just as did Kautsky at that time,



deny the possibility of the proletariat's passing to a counter-attack, and even the very fact of that attack at the present moment, deferring that possibility to an indefinite morrow. They, just as Kautsky in those years, are recommending the proletariat to carry out the tactic of Fabius Maximus Cunctator: in English, the tactics of Fabianism, or of marking time. They, just as Kautsky in those years, are warning against the "appeal to the unorganised masses," and propose to concentrate all the work exclusively inside the reformist trade unions. Just as Kautsky declared that the elemental mass has as frequently assisted in the victory of the counter-revolution as in that of the revolution, so they now are declaring that the "appeal to the unorganised masses over the head of the trade unions" is a "road which in its consequences is counter-revolutionary." Just as Kautsky in those days concealed his profoundly opportunist position with radical phrases, just as he hid his retreat from the developing mass struggle to annihilate the chief bulwark of the junker reaction in Prussia by talk of decisive battles in the future when the attempt on universal suffrage in the Reichstag is made, so they also conceal their tactic of retreat in the now developing mass economic battles behind talk of "workers' control over production," a "slogan" which sounds very revolutionary, but which in the present German conditions connotes no more than the celebrated social-democratic "economic democracy." They are capitulating to social-democracy along the whole line, but they say they are struggling for a better, more "intelligent" method of overcoming it. So the Brandlerites are acting now, and the conciliators very cautiously take up the refrain.

How could it have happened that the Brandlerites, the former Luxemburgites, have now gone over to the position of pre-war Kautskyism, with which they once carried on such a ruthless struggle? It would be quite incomprehensible if we did not know that Rosa Luxemburg also was blessed not only with a right hand, but with a left, that she had not only a positive but also a negative side. In the conditions of pre-war Germany, when a directly revolutionary situation still did not exist, and in the conditions of Germany immediately after the war, when a mass Com-

munist Party capable of accomplishing the proletarian revolution was still non-existent, this did not involve any relatively great danger: but now, when Germany also has entered a period of revolutionary development, a period of direct struggle for power, it is absolutely incompatible, it can have no connection whatever with the tasks of the Communist Party.

#### LENIN, LUXEMBURG AND THE MASSES

In the pre-war period Rosa Luxemburg endeavoured to apply the experience of the Russian revolution to Germany. But she only half assimilated that experience. To her a number of elements which composed and still compose essential parts of Leninism and Leninist strategy remained incomprehensible and alien.

Like Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin ascribed enormous importance to the elemental movement of the proletariat; but even as early as 1902 in his "What is to be Done?" Lenin carried on a ruthless struggle against bowing before the elements, whilst Rosa Luxemburg did bow before the elements of the proletarian masses (the revolutionary element, of course). Lenin strove to raise the Party to an unprecedented height. He split with the Mensheviks on the question of the organisation and role of the Party. He began to build the Party by the selection of "professional revolutionaries," welded in an iron discipline, carrying on a ruthless struggle against all deviations, against all penetration of petty bourgeois influence into the Party. And this for Lenin arose not out of any sectarian disdain of the masses. On the contrary, he understood that it was thanks to its very Jacobin implacability that the Party might best of all master and direct the elemental movement of the masses: "Without this condition," (of a mass movement), he said, "the organisation of professional revolutionaries would be a plaything, an adventure, a sign-post to nowhere," and the pamphlet, "What is to be Done?" again and again emphasises that "only in association with a class truly revolutionary and elementally rising to the struggle does the organisation defended in that pamphlet have meaning." "We can only rejoice," he wrote, "if the social-democrats succeed in directing every strike, for it is the



direct and revolutionary obligation of social-democracy to direct all the manifestations of the class struggle of the proletariat, and a strike is one of the most profound and most mighty manifestations of that struggle. But we should be only a tail if we were to identify such an elemental, ipso facto no more than a trade unionist form of struggle with the universal and conscious social-democratic struggle. We shall be opportunistically legalising a deliberate falsehood if we give every striker the right to "declare himself a member of the Party," for in the masses of instances such a 'declaration' will be a false one." Lenin built up the Party on the basis of the developing movement of the mass, but in doing so he strove to raise the Party to an unprecedented height. But although, of course, she also recognised that the Party is the advance-guard of the working class, Rosa Luxemburg none the less proposed that the Party should dissolve into the revolutionary element of the working class. She wrote: "The emancipation of the working class can be the work only of the working class itself—this guiding principle of the Communist Manifesto has also in particular the sense that within the class party of the proletariat also every decisive movement ought to arise not from the initiative of a handful of leaders, but from the conviction and resolution of the mass of adherents to the Party. . . . It is the work of the members of the Party and trade unions in every town, in every district to take up an attitude to the question of the present situation and to express in clear and open form his opinion, his will, so that the opinion of the organised working mass as a whole should make itself heard. And if this were to happen, our leaders would undoubtedly remain always at their posts, as has happened hitherto." (Luxemburg, "Attrition or Struggle." "Neue Zeit," 1910, vol. 2, page 262.) Lenin no less than Rosa Luxemburg, demanded that the Party should pay the utmost attention to the mood of the masses and should even learn from those masses, and that the leaders of the Party should also give an attentive ear to the Party masses. But it never entered his head to suggest that the Party and the leaders of the Party should abnegate their initiative and their directing role. Rosa Luxemburg, of course, also demanded that the Party should

stand at the head of the mass movement, but for her this leadership amounted exclusively to the Party leaders being the loud-speaker of the masses. Citing as an example the conduct of the Belgian leaders during the mass strikes of the nineties, she wrote: "In these two strikes the Party leadership did indeed constitute an absolutely single whole with the masses. It moved at the head of the movement, directed, and had the complete mastery of that movement for the very reason that it was in complete contact with the pulse of the masses, it adapted itself to them and represented nothing other than a speaking-trumpet, a conscious expression of the feelings and desires of the masses." (Luxemburg: Collected Works, vol. 4, p. 78.) Lenin also set the Party the task of being in the closest contact with the mass, of giving heed to its pulse; but he never confined the role of the Party to that of being the "speaking-trumpet of the masses," for the Party always sees further than the masses, and in certain cases in the very interests of the class as a whole it must go against the stream. When, for example, during the February, 1917, revolution, the Russian working masses were inclined to defence of the country, did the Leninists take on themselves the role of being the "speaking-trumpet of the masses"? Rather they endeavoured gradually to re-educate those masses cautiously, calling their attitude "conscientious defensism," and simultaneously carrying on a ruthless struggle with the Menshevik, Socialist-revolutionary defensist leaders. Lenin set the Party the task not only of "letting loose" mass attacks, but also of binding them, of uniting, organising and "appointing," when the necessary pre-requisites had been created for this. But Rosa Luxemburg systematically mocked at the pretensions of the central leadership to "command" the mass movement, "to appoint" mass attacks. Rosa Luxemburg forgot that in Russia in 1905, after a number of mass attacks and mass strikes, which had been fixed by no one, there developed the grandest and at that time the most historically important general October strike, which certainly was "appointed." "The obligation of the Party," she wrote, "consists only of saying at all times fearlessly what is the situation, i.e., in clearly and definitely setting the masses their



tasks at the given historical moment, in proclaiming the political program of action and the slogans arising from the situation. All care as to whether and when a revolutionary mass insurrection will become associated with this must be left by socialism with a tranquil heart to history itself." (Works, vol. 4, p. 76.) In accordance with this theory, Rosa Luxemburg, in contradistinction from Lenin, counter-posed the organisational and technical tasks to the political tasks, adopting a highly negligent attitude to the former. She wrote: "Instead of racking one's mind over the technical side of the business, over the mechanism of the mass strike, social-democracy is called upon to take in its hand the political leadership, and in the revolutionary period also."

#### LENIN AND THE PARTY

Just as did Rosa Luxemburg, so Lenin understood that the Party slogans can have historical significance only when they can find a response in the vast proletarian masses. But in order that the Party should be able to find such slogans, it must protect itself by iron discipline from any penetration of bourgeois and petty bourgeois influences into it. "The stronger our Party organisations, comprising genuine social-democrats," he wrote in 1903, "the less unsteadiness and instability there is inside the Party, the wider, the more varied, and the richer and more fruitful will be the Party's influence on the environing elements of the working masses led by it." Having begun to build up the Party from groups, Lenin well understood that if a Party built up on the basis of a strict selection of professional revolutionaries is placed in direct opposition to an amorphous mass, then, even though that Party has a proletarian composition it may develop into a sect and lose all contact with the mass. But in order to avoid this, he did not propose to open the doors of the Party wide to any and every wavering opportunist element, but, whilst retaining the iron discipline of the Party, he proposed to surround it with various broad, non-Party organisations. As early as 1903 he wrote that side by side with the Party organisation there should exist "organisations of workers attached to the Party; organisations of workers not attached to the Party, but in real-

ity subject to its control and direction; unorganised elements of the working class which in part are also subordinated, at any rate at times of great demonstrations of the class struggle, to the leadership of the social-democrats." Thus even in 1903, Lenin took clear stock of the fact that the Party should have in its hands a number of guiding reins in the form of broad non-Party workers' organisations, which on the one hand could manifest the will and attitude of the masses to the Party, and which on the other could serve as channels for the transference of the directives of the Party leadership to the vast masses. When the Bolshevik Party was transformed from an organisation of "professional revolutionaries" into a mass party built up on the basis of democratic centralism, the Bolsheviks remained faithful to the same principle: the strengthening of the Party by an iron discipline and at the same time the close connection of the Party with the masses by means of broad non-Party organisations (trade unions, factory committees, workers' and peasants' conferences, Soviets, and so on). All this complex problem of the organised capture of the broad masses by a party restricted by a definite selective process and welded by an iron discipline was for Rosa Luxemburg at the best a question of secondary importance.

For Lenin with the question of the role of the Party was closely bound the problem of realising the hegemony of the working class in the revolution over the other revolutionary classes and strata, particularly over the peasantry. For the very reason that Lenin confronted the proletariat with the problem of leadership of the many millions of peasantry, he was particularly insistent on the iron discipline of the Party and on its adopting an implacable attitude to any kind of opportunist deviation; for the broader the petty bourgeois masses which the proletariat had to direct during the revolution, the greater the danger of petty bourgeois influence penetrating into the proletarian party, and the more implacable ought the struggle with such influences to be. Rosa Luxemburg paid the minimum of attention to this problem of the hegemony of the proletariat over the peasantry and over the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie generally. In her pamphlet:



"The mass strike, the Party and the trade unions," in which she acquainted the German workers with the Russian 1905 revolution, she does not even mention the peasantry. And this although the most characteristic feature of that revolution was the agrarian movement, which took on extraordinary dimensions, and although Lenin considered the 1905 revolution as first and foremost an "agrarian revolution," and accordingly confronted it with the problem of realising a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry."

#### THE QUESTION OF INSURRECTION

The problem of the army and of armed insurrection was also raised in connection with this. Just as Rosa Luxemburg, so Lenin said again and again that the revolution is not made to order, and in his pamphlet: "'Left-Wing' Communism" he gave a concrete formulation to the combination of objective conditions which is indispensable to the direct development of a revolutionary situation. But when such a situation was present Lenin confronted the Party with the task of the "organisation of the revolution," and in particular of "the organisation of the insurrection." But Rosa Luxemburg saw only one side of the business: the objective conditions engendering an elemental revolutionary movement, and she restricted the task of the Party to an estimate of the class forces, the formulation of political slogans, and political propaganda and agitation. When dealing in the above-mentioned pamphlet with the mass strikes of the Russian proletariat as being a specific class form of its struggle, she confines her remarks on the problem of armed insurrection to a single sentence: "History found a solution to this problem" (of mollifying the forms of the class struggle), "in a somewhat more profound and a finer sense in the appearance of revolutionary mass strikes, which it is true by no means replace and do not render superfluous the naked, brutal street struggle, but which restrict the latter only to a single moment of a long political period of struggle." ("Works," vol. 4, p. 459). Thus the systematic, stubborn work which was carried on during 1905 in the army, those innumerable insurrections, led by the Party or by members of the Party, which took place during that year and which had

their consummation in the December rising in Moscow, which Lenin regards as the "dress rehearsal" without which the revolution would not have been victorious in 1917—all this is absolutely beyond the ken of Rosa Luxemburg.

We see that when popularising the lessons of the Russian revolution in the west, Luxemburg, who was a pioneer of the revolutionary movement in Germany, had far from completely assimilated that experience. Rosa Luxemburg's under-estimation of the role of the Party and the organisation in the revolution constituted her chief weak feature, which of course, was explainable, but not justifiable. The explanation of this serious hiatus consists first in the fact that Rosa Luxemburg worked chiefly in Germany, at a time when a direct revolutionary situation was still non-existent in that country, and so there was nothing to raise to the forefront the problems connected with the organisation of the revolution: secondly, in Germany the organisation of the working class, especially the trade unions, had become a brake on and not a source of revolutionary development in the German workers' movement. But even so, this could not serve as a justification for Rosa Luxemburg, inasmuch as she had no need to invent Leninism, since it existed even in the pre-war period as a gigantic historical fact which Rosa Luxemburg had the opportunity of observing and studying. If Rosa Luxemburg and the "left-radicals" had completely assimilated the lessons of Leninism at that time, the birth-pangs of the German Communist Party would undoubtedly have been greatly alleviated, and the organisational severance of left-radicalism from the opportunist degenerated German social-democracy would have been accelerated. The "left-radicals" would have taken organisational form even before the war, as a fraction inside the German social-democracy, and after the declaration of war it would at once have entered into the closest organisational association with the Russian Bolsheviks. None the less, at that time the positive services of Luxemburgism in the German situation outweighed its negative aspects, its errors, to an enormous degree. Consequently Rosa Luxemburg's historical service is enormous, and she, perishing heroically after the Spartacus rising, has passed into history with an extraordinarily large active balance to her credit.



## FAILURE OF LUXEMBURG'S FOLLOWERS

But when a mass Communist Party had been formed in Germany, and when in 1923 there were present not only the objective but also the subjective prerequisites for a victorious proletarian revolution, the old comrades and partisans of Rosa Luxemburg, faced as leaders of the C.P. with the problem of direct struggle for power and with the organisation of an insurrection, demonstrated that at such a moment semi-Leninism is quite inadequate. In so far as they had not outlived the above indicated weak sides of Luxemburgism, despite the very rich experience of the German C.P. after Luxemburg's death, at such a severely critical moment they inevitably slipped back from Luxemburg to Kautsky, they inevitably betrayed not only Leninism but also that which constituted the strong, revolutionary side of Luxemburgism. Not having a Leninist comprehension of the enormous role of the Party, not having a Leninist comprehension of the importance of the hegemony of the proletariat, not able in Leninist fashion organisationally to connect up with the elementally developing workers' movement, to unite it and direct it, not able in Leninist fashion to organise the rising, and endeavouring rather to organise it by purely bureaucratic methods, they felt all their utter impotence. As a result they slipped into a coalition with the opportunist social-democratic party, began to put the emphasis not on the revolutionary, but on the backward workers, began to act as a brake on the elementally revolutionary movement of the masses, and towards the end capitulated without a struggle. All this connoted not merely the abnegation of Leninism, but also the abnegation of the revolutionary traditions of Luxemburgism. Anyone who at a severe, critical moment does not move forward inevitably slips backward.

Even then, in 1923, the Brandlerites were slipping along the road to social-democracy. But when it became clear to the Comintern and the German C.P. that we had entered on the "third period" of the crisis in capitalism, on a period demanding a change in tactics

conforming to the intensifying antagonisms, a change in the sense of a more resolute struggle against social-democracy along the whole line, in the sense of a total rejection of the united front with it from above, when this new tactic was laid down at the E.C.C.I. Ninth Plenum, at the Profintern Fourth Congress and at the Comintern Sixth Congress, when the German Communist Party, in preparation for the counter-attack against the united bourgeois-social-democratic front under the extremely difficult conditions conforming with this difficult task, began to tighten up the Party, to strengthen its discipline and to struggle more determinedly against all vacillation—then the Brandlerites, who had never understood the role of the Party, rushed a second time to the right and this time finally slipped into the morass of centrism.

This is not the first, nor will it be the last time in the history of the revolutionary movement, that a revolutionary trend has not succeeded in reconstructing itself in time in application to the sharp turns of history, and has leapt across to the other side of the barricades. This is, of course, an undoubted loss for the German C.P., but it is part of the inevitable costs of the development and growth of a revolutionary Party.

At the price of these losses the German C.P. has acquired the possibility of consequentially pursuing a Leninist policy without fear of hindrance from within. The enormous importance of this gain has already made itself felt in the Ruhr struggles, in which, despite the only just closed internal Party crisis, and the colossal opposition of social-democracy from outside the Party and of the rights and conciliators from within, the Party succeeded in finding a road to the masses, gaining contact with them and capturing the leadership of the movement.

From Luxemburgism the Brandlerites have slipped gradually back to centrism. But the German C.P. as a whole has grown out of being a Luxemburgite, Spartacus group into a mass Leninist party, and is now moving forward resolutely along the Leninist road. And that is a pledge of its future victories.



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# The Reparations Problem and the Imperialist Bloc

By E. Varga

**F**OR ten years the question of reparations has been one of the most important objects of imperialist antagonism. Events after the war showed that the demagogic promises—"The Germans shall pay for everything"—made by the Entente bourgeoisie to their peoples, suffering terribly under the burdens of war, could not really be carried out. The attempt to force Germany to pay a great deal at once led to the complete disorganisation of capitalist German economy, to inflation and to an acutely revolutionary situation. With capitalist society in Europe greatly weakened by the war, an acutely revolutionary situation in Central Europe threatened all other capitalist countries. Therefore, in the interests of capitalist supremacy, ways and means had to be found both to get reparations from Germany and to ensure the stabilisation of German capitalism.

This was done by the Dawes Plan. It must be admitted that the Plan turned out to be excellently adapted to the purpose of stabilising German capitalism. But the Dawes Plan was not only intended to safeguard the interests of capitalist rule as a whole. It was also, in some way or another, to reconcile the hostilities existing between the principal imperialist Powers, which we shall briefly recall to the reader.

## IMPERIALIST AIMS

France was concerned to attain supremacy on the European continent. To achieve this object, not only was Germany to remain unarmed, as set down in the Peace Treaty, but the left bank of the Rhine was always to remain in French occupation, while on the right bank a neutral "buffer" state was to be established, which would enable French heavy industry to obtain a monopoly of west European coal and iron. In addition to this, the unity of the old German Empire was to be destroyed by a separation of South Germany

from Prussia, and the eventual re-uniting of South Germany and Austria—in short, the re-establishment of that disunity among the German peoples which existed before the formation of the German Empire in 1870.

England would not consider such an extension of the area controlled by France. When, therefore, the French bourgeoisie put their programme into action by occupying the Ruhr, England dissociated herself from this action and secretly urged the German bourgeoisie to resistance. This was a continuation of England's traditional policy of lending support to that State on the European continent whose neighbour formed at any given time, England's most powerful rival. But, on the other hand, the British bourgeoisie could not, wholeheartedly and definitely, help to re-establish the power of the German bourgeoisie. The whole meaning of the world war, as far as the British capitalists were concerned, was that it constituted a decisive setback to Germany's imperialist advance. Germany had dared to try and bring Eastern Europe and Turkey under her influence, and had, penetrating between British and Tsarist imperialism, attempted to set up an Empire in Eastern Asia that threatened India. Moreover in the decade before the war, Germany had also begun to overtake Britain in the industrial sphere. Consequently, the British bourgeoisie could not definitely support either France or Germany. They were forced to a policy of weakening the two countries, either of which might become dangerous, by means of encouraging a struggle between them, thus gaining time to extend and strengthen their own imperialist power.

The U.S.A. was the third decisive factor in this question of reparations. The hostility between England and America was at that time only in its early stages, and the bourgeoisie of the two countries could therefore co-operate in opposition to the French



capitalists. The Americans had nothing to fear from France or Germany, and, therefore, the dominant section of the American bourgeoisie, the representatives of finance capital, were eager to place Germany in a position where she would be capable of taking large loans of American capital. For this purpose Germany had to be protected from French attack and its territorial unity maintained. In this respect, American and English interests coincided as against those of France. But, unlike England, the American bourgeoisie had nothing to fear from an economic or political revival in Germany.

#### THE DAWES PLAN

The result of all these cross purposes, and of many other less important ones into which the scope of this article does not allow us to enter, was the Dawes Plan. This Plan put an end to the French bourgeoisie's imperialist plans of destroying German unity. It, therefore, protected England from the danger of French supremacy on the continent; it guaranteed the reconstruction of German economy on a capitalist basis, and at the same time it prevented, for the time being, the re-emergence of acutely revolutionary situations, thus protecting the interests of capitalist society as a whole. To American capitalism, the Plan afforded the opportunity of investing capital in Germany, and the possibility of bringing Germany economically under its influence, thus laying a strong foundation in Europe which would be of service in its future struggle with England.

On the whole, the Dawes Plan accomplished its object. It must be strongly emphasised that at present there is no acute crisis in the working out of the Dawes Plan; that it is not incapacity on the part of Germany to fulfil its obligations which is causing the desire for a re-arrangement of the reparations problem. But on the other hand, the past four years have offered no proof that, in the long run, the Dawes Plan could function without any friction. That there is no acute crisis is evident from the construction of the Dawes Plan itself, which distinguishes between the payment of the stipulated sums, amounting, from the normal year of 1928, to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  milliard marks annually, and the assignment of payments abroad. There was never any doubt

that Germany could raise the sums provided for. At present the value of the product of German industry amounts roughly to 50 milliard marks per annum. Reparation payments account therefore, for about 5 per cent. of the annual value of production. According to various estimates annual accumulation in Germany amounts at the present to six to nine milliard marks. It cannot be doubted that  $2\frac{1}{2}$  milliard marks could be deducted from this without deeply affecting or injuring the development of German capitalist economy. In the last analysis, reparation payments are made not by the capitalists, but by the proletariat, whose standard of life is lowered on the pretext of the necessity of making reparation payments, a pretext put forward by the capitalists and reformists in unison. The various German attempts to reduce the level of reparation payments on the ground that the required sums could not be obtained through fiscal measures or the budget, proved entirely unsuccessful; indeed, in the past year, Germany had, on the basis of the "prosperity index," to pay 300 million marks more in reparations than the sum originally laid down in the Plan.

But the position is different with regard to the transfer question. The Dawes Plan, as is well known, laid it down that the sums raised internally should be transferred to the creditors of Germany only in such a way as would not endanger the stability of the German exchanges. It is obvious that a transference of values from one country to another can only take place in the form of goods, i.e., of commodities (and to some extent of services). Germany is not a gold producing country, nor, after the war, did she retain any of her foreign loans, the interest on which could be used in reparation payments. In the long run reparations could only be paid by an excess of the export of commodities over the import. Now it is well known that since the existence of the reparations plan Germany has always had a large passive balance in its foreign trade. In spite of that, she has always succeeded in transferring the reparations regularly. This was made possible by the fact that, in this period, Germany received foreign credits up to about 10 milliard marks, of which about one-half was left abroad as reparation payments. It is clear then that

what has happened up to the present is no indication that the transfer of payments will proceed smoothly in the future.

In the event of the impossibility of transference, the Dawes Plan lays it down that those sums which cannot be transferred should, up to the sum of 5 milliard gold marks, be deposited in the German Reichsbank, or invested in German bonds. If the 5 milliard limit is reached, the sums raised internally for reparations are to be decreased in accordance with the possibilities of transfer. This regulation is the reason for our contention that no crisis exists in the working out of the Dawes Plan.

Since a part of reparation payments—more than 40 per cent.—is made by the delivery of goods, and since the 26 per cent. tax on German goods in England ensures a certain possibility of transfer, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  milliard marks can be transferred annually without foreign loans, and without the German exchanges being directly endangered. Assuming no changes in the execution of the Dawes Plan, it would take about five years before the limit of non-transferable sums, determined in the Plan, would be reached. For the present, therefore, there is no acute crisis.

#### WHY A NEW REPARATIONS SETTLEMENT

The question then arises: In the absence of any acute crisis, what has induced Germany's creditors, above all England and France, to enter into negotiations concerning a new settlement of the reparations question? The answer to this lies in the changed relations between the principal imperialist Powers.

At the time of the establishment of the Dawes Plan, the hostility between England and the U.S.A. was more or less latent, while that between England and France was acute and determined British policy. To-day the position is quite reversed. British-American hostility governs world foreign policy, while England and France have again established the old Entente. This does not mean that British-French hostility has disappeared. Not in the least! The hostility was so great that it had to be settled either by a war or by a temporary alliance. With the most recent development of military technique, England has strategically ceased to be an island with regard to France. Long distance guns,

numerous submarines and a powerful aerial fleet enable France to attack England directly. The Channel no longer affords any protection against French attacks. Consequently the British bourgeoisie can no longer carry out a world policy unless protected against a French attack which would threaten the metropolis. Since England is both the organiser of the capitalist bloc against the Soviet Union and the leader of the European debtor countries against the United States, since England is forced to carry on over the whole world a struggle against the fights for independence on the part of the colonial peoples which she holds in suppression, she had to come to an agreement with France in order to keep her hands free for world policy. We can observe therefore the formation of a new bloc composed of England, France, their vassal States and Japan on the one hand, and on the other hand America with her vassal States.

The attempt to get a new settlement of the reparations question is a part of the struggle to draw Germany either into the Anglo-French or into the American bloc.

The economic development of Germany in the last four years has been much more rapid than was anticipated when the Dawes Plan was signed. Although disarmed—at least on paper—Germany has now become a strong imperialist Power. With modern war technique, the decisive factors in the event of war are not—other things being equal—the standing army and the munitions reserve, but the industrial development of a country which enables it to maintain a sufficient supply of military equipment for its fighting population.

This depends on the development of a country's entire industry, and particularly its metal and chemical industries. Potentially, therefore, Germany is one of the most powerful imperialist States, for it possesses excellent metal and chemical industries and a population which is rapidly increasing in numbers. It is therefore quite clear why England, the driving force in war preparations against the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. has for years been trying to draw Germany into the West European bloc.

In truth, England and France have succeeded in turning Germany's attention more and more to the west, in bringing Germany



into the League of Nations, and, by the Locarno Pact, in turning her from her anti-French attitude. Germany's economic development, the closer relations between French and German capital, the formation of Franco-German cartels, made this work easier. But up to the present the policy of Locarno has given no positive advantage to Germany. At the time when the Pact was signed, the German capitalists were fed with hopes of an evacuation of the Rhineland before 1935, the year laid down in the Peace Treaty, and of an accommodating attitude towards German colonial activity and imperialist expansion, to which a great impetus would necessarily be given by German economic development. Nothing so far has come of all these hopes, and the German capitalists are, therefore, demanding the evacuation of the Rhineland. The French capitalists answer this with a demand for a new settlement of the reparations question and for the maintenance of some sort of French military control of the Rhineland, even after evacuation, up to 1935 and also afterwards. These three problems, Rhineland evacuation, military control of the Rhineland areas after evacuation, and a re-settlement of reparations, are very closely bound up with each other.

#### ENGLISH AND FRENCH ANTAGONISM

As for questions of political power, the hostility between England and France is apparent in the continual vacillations of British policy. England is principally concerned in winning Germany over to an active anti-Soviet policy and into the anti-American bloc.

The semi-official "Kölnische Zeitung" wrote as follows on 19-12-28:

"According to reliable sources, Chamberlain's intention at the conversations beginning at Lugano about evacuation, is to bring that question into relation with German policy towards Russia. This means that his agreement to the withdrawal of the Belgian-English-French troops is dependent upon Germany more or less ceasing to have relations with Russia, i.e., his intention is to bargain the freedom of the Rhineland against British world political interests and to attempt to use Russia as a whip with which to chastise

"Chamberlain therefore wishes to use the opportunity of the Rhineland evacuation as a means for pressing Germany into the anti-Russian front; and if Germany shows signs of disobedience, to punish her with a continuation of occupation."

While England is thus going straight for her objective, France's policy towards Germany is one of vacillation. The French capitalists fear—and rightly fear—a repetition of the events of 100 years ago, when Napoleon forced the Prussian troops into war against Tsarist Russia, and when those troops, as the chances of war changed, went over to the Russian side, and together with the Russians made war on France. The French bourgeoisie wants guarantees that after the cessation of the Rhineland occupation, Germany will be unable to begin a "war of revenge" on France. Hence their demand for the maintenance of military control even after 1935. On this question the British capitalists have not yet made up their mind. In Chamberlain's absence, Churchill almost openly declared that according to the interpretation of §421 of the Versailles Peace Treaty by the Germans, the obligation to evacuate the Rhineland becomes effective as soon as Germany fulfils her reparations obligations; but Chamberlain on the other hand, in a speech made early in December, entirely accepted the French position, according to which the obligation to evacuate commences only

"When Germany has completely carried out all her obligations under the reparations agreement. It is not enough for Germany to fulfil her current reparations obligations regularly."

"The Economist" of December 8, 1928, remarks on this subject that Chamberlain went even further than France in his interpretation of this clause of the treaty. It cannot be doubted but that Chamberlain's attitude on this point means greater pressure on Germany to enter the anti-Soviet bloc. But the British capitalists would also be quite prepared to show a more accommodating attitude to German desires, at the expense of France, were they sure that Germany is prepared and determined to enter the English bloc.

As for the German capitalists, the essence of their policy consists, in our opinion, in

selling their allegiance to either the English or the American bloc, according as to which offers the more advantageous terms. In spite of the unexpected increase of strength in the last four years, the German capitalists are still too weak to have an independent world policy, they are still too weak, even should they wish it, to defend their neutrality by armed force in the event of a war by the English bloc on the Soviet Union. They therefore want to get the best that they can for themselves out of the given situation. With the rapid intensification of Anglo-American rivalry, there is also the chance of Germany regaining her independence as a world-power by coming in on the side of America.

The foregoing analysis gives a rough outline of the world situation in which the negotiations for a new settlement of the reparations question are beginning.

#### MATERIAL FACTORS OF THE SITUATION

Let us turn now to the material factors involved. It is no easy task to pick out, from among the thousands of speeches and articles, worthy of a strategical nature what is most essential and significant. One thing is clear, that each side is putting forward much higher demands than it is prepared to accept. The matter is still further complicated by the problem of inter-allied debts, but we can say that the position of the negotiating powers is roughly as follows:

U.S.A.: the American capitalists have announced, through Coolidge, that the linking up of the reparations question with that of inter-allied debts is inadmissible. The matter of indebtedness to the United States has been settled and all agreements, with one exception, ratified officially. President-elect Hoover shares this viewpoint. He is of the opinion that Germany can pay the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  milliard marks, that all the debtor States, with the exception perhaps of Italy, can pay their debts to the U.S.A., and that all attempts to entangle inter-allied debts and reparations are nothing but attempts to make the American taxpayer pay more.

France: the French bourgeoisie, as Poincaré has so often proclaimed, demands a sum from Germany which will meet French debts to England and America and which will, in addition, be sufficient to provide for the amor-

tisation and interest payments on the funds expended in the reconstruction of the devastated areas.

England: the British bourgeoisie, now as formerly, hold to the Balfour Note, i.e., they demand a sum from all their debtors, including Germany, neither greater nor less than shall be sufficient to pay off British indebtedness to the United States. The British bourgeoisie is determined not to approach America with a request for a reduction of debts, a step which would, in any case, considering the intensification of Anglo-American rivalry, be purposeless.

Germany: the German bourgeoisie is anxious for a large decrease in reparation payments, the abolition of the "prosperity index," and a definite determination, either of the total sum to be paid in reparations, or of the annual amount to be paid and the number of years for which it is to be paid; evacuation of the Rhineland, no control after 1935, the inclusion of Austria, and a modification of the eastern frontiers.

As for the urgency of the question, Germany, so long as she is protected by the transfer clause, has no reason to press for a new settlement, unless that were to offer better material and political advantages. Nor is the matter urgent for France, who regularly receives reparation payments and, fearing Germany, would only surrender the occupation of the Rhine most unwillingly, unless that were compensated for by military guarantees. The United States, too, has no pressing reason to hasten a settlement of the question, although Parker Gilbert, the reparations agent, is doing his utmost to set the negotiations going. In this he is strongly influenced by the Morgan interests, for whom the huge transactions involved in the commercialisation of German reparation payments would mean great profits.

The only power for whom a settlement of the question is a matter of urgency, is England. England wants to draw Germany into the anti-Soviet and the anti-American bloc, and is therefore most actively interested in a rearrangement of conditions.

The experts will meet in January for discussion. They will try to fix on definitely Germany's reparation obligations, a task which, as is well known, the Dawes Plan failed



to do. If we consider the possibility of a reduction in the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  milliards, that reduction, if France, England and America maintain their present position, will be very small. The debts of the Entente States to the U.S.A. amount annually to about 1,700 million marks for a period of 62 years. Germany would have to shoulder this burden. In addition the interest on the sums expended by France in reconstruction, amounting according to the present rate of exchange to 16 milliard marks, requires 800 million marks annually.

#### POSSIBILITY OF REDUCING REPARATION PAYMENTS

It is clear that if the negotiators stick to their demands, only a very small reduction of Germany's reparation debts is possible, and it is questionable whether the German bourgeoisie would be willing to give up the protection afforded by the transfer clause for the sake of a few hundred millions. There are three ways in which a reduction of Germany's obligations is possible.

1. A huge financial transaction, in which the position of the U.S.A. would formally, it is true, be as before, but though which, by the exchange of inter-allied debts against German obligations and the fixing of a lower rate of interest, America would actually be in receipt of a smaller sum. Such a solution, into whose financial details we cannot now enter, would mean as regards foreign politics that America would renounce her immediate claim on the Entente States, that is, America would renounce one of her most important methods of exercising pressure on England and France. On the other hand, such a resolution would greatly increase Germany's dependence on the U.S.A., and America's chances of drawing Germany into the anti-British bloc.

2. A reduction in reparation payments is possible if England were to agree to leave to France a part of the 22 per cent. reparation payments consigned to England under the plan, i.e., if England were to deviate from the principle of the Balfour Note.

3. It is possible that France might be satisfied with less than the sum necessary to provide for amortisation and interest payments on the costs of reconstruction.

In the last few months innumerable versions

of the plans of the Entente powers have appeared in the Press. But a constant factor in all these versions is the attempt of England and France so to regulate the new arrangement that its results will create hostility between Germany and America. This is clear in the following plan: Germany's reparations obligations are to be separated into two. The first part, amounting to about 1,700 million marks annually is to be devoted to covering allied debts to America. A new body, under the chairmanship of an American, is to be set up to receive the German payments and to transfer them to America in the name of the allied governments. Briefly, this organisation will make it clear to the Germans that they are really paying reparations to the U.S.A., and that the amount of those payments depends entirely on the U.S.A., and not on the Entente countries. On the English side, this is called giving to Germany the fruits of a future and more favourable settlement of inter-allied debts. Such a situation would clearly put difficulties in the way of friendship between Germany and America. The sum to be paid by Germany apart from that going to the U.S.A., is to be immediately commercialised, i.e., placed on the world market as bonds (in the German railways and industries) and the proceeds transferred immediately to France and Belgium. This method of replacing annual payments by one total payment would mean that France, while formally maintaining her point of view, actually renounced her demands. It would then be possible to fix Germany's annual payments at 2 milliards for 62 years.

#### GERMAN COUNTER-CLAIMS

With such an arrangement, the German bourgeoisie could put forward counter-claims to compensate them for the renunciation of the transfer clause and as payment for their adherence to the British anti-Soviet bloc. These demands would include the immediate evacuation of the Rhineland, the inclusion of Austria and, later on, concessions with regard to the German-Polish frontier. But these very demands are an obstacle to Anglo-French co-operation. We have already dealt with the question of the Rhineland evacuation and French "security." As for the inclusion of



Austria in Germany, Briand expressed himself quite unambiguously at Lugano.

"The treaty of St. Germain lays it down that Austria cannot renounce her independence without the unanimous consent of the League of Nations Council. Should Austria appeal to the Council, I should not be opposed to the question being discussed by that tribunal, for no unanimity would be reached, since France, at least, would vote against it, and the question would be answered in the negative. If however at any time, though I do not believe this will happen, Germany were to make a coup d'état and annex Austria, let not Germany forget that such an action would inevitably mean war."

(Note.—From the wireless report from Lugano, as published in the "Temps," December 16, 1928.)

Briand therefore threatens Germany with war should Austria be included in the German realm. Similarly, any attempt on the part of Germany to acquire the "corridor" or a part of Upper Silesia from Poland would encounter equally great obstacles from the French side. The German bourgeoisie are also trying to exploit Anglo-American rivalry to improve their own position. A telegram from the American correspondent of the "Berliner Tageblatt," published on Dec. 12th, 1928, throws light on this matter. It runs as follows:

"The limitation of German policy in recent years to almost exclusively continental considerations, while utterly ignoring world-political possibilities, have never been understood here. The question is often asked as to why Germany, for the sake of temporary and secondary concessions, overlooks important foreign combinations which would be of much greater value in the future. People here often discuss whether Germany, in the course of this development, limited as it is to fairly narrow European frontiers, will, sooner or later, allow herself to be drawn into a united front with the European governments, whose attitude to the United States is growing more and more antagonistic. People here are inclined to consider this as somewhat shortsighted, especially as Germany, dependent on world markets, could, by close co-operation with the United States, look forward to very good prospects. Not to

speak of the possibility that Germany's position will be used as a bridge to Russia.

"American feeling towards England and France has been profoundly influenced by the secret naval agreement between those two States, that Germany should only turn to West European alliances, after having taken into account that the practical and moral support of America will, in the long run, have more weight in the settlement of all German problems, than all the promises of European governments."

This description, in our opinion, correctly reflects the political attitude of a part at least of the American bourgeoisie, and also indicates the efforts of the German bourgeoisie to exploit to their own advantage Anglo-American hostility.

On the whole it can be said that the negotiations now beginning about reparations are as complicated as was, in its time, the work of the Dawes Commission. The main difference is that formerly Germany was not an active factor in the affair, while to-day new Germany is a powerful factor, not yet won by either of the two world political blocs, the English or the American. Consequently, the factor of foreign policy will be more important in the present negotiations than the purely financial question of the amount of annual payments in which the possibilities of alteration are, in any case, narrowly limited.

#### NO LASTING SETTLEMENT POSSIBLE

It is clear that even should a new settlement of reparations obligations be reached in the new negotiations—a result of which we are by no means certain—it would not be a lasting settlement. The question is, will the German bourgeoisie settle the transfer problem. Assuming that Germany's obligations will be reduced to 2 milliard marks per annum and remembering that, in addition, Germany has to pay from six to eight hundred millions in interest on the foreign capital invested in Germany, it is extremely doubtful whether she will be able to raise almost 3 milliard marks annually from the balance of her foreign trade, without resorting to further foreign loans. To do this an active trade balance of three milliard marks would be necessary (or rather somewhat less because of Germany's income from shipping services). This means



that her exports must be increased by about 5 milliards per annum, in order to cover the present teading deficit and to realise from her export of commodities sufficient wherewith to pay her reparations obligations and the interest on foreign loans. This, with the present acute struggle for markets for industrial products is an extremely difficult task to accomplish. It is true that since the stabilisation of the German exchanges, and particularly in 1928, German exports have increased greatly, but it is still a long way off from an active trade balance, if we are to believe the German figures of foreign trade.\*

Clearly, the transfer problem will not disappear with the annulment of the transfer clause. This means that in order to pay her reparations obligations from the values of her own production, Germany must produce more cheaply than all her competitors. This means that the working conditions and the standard of life of the German proletariat would have to be still further worsened, in order to enable (without encroaching upon capitalist profits) Germany to sell so cheaply

\* The suspicion has often been expressed in Entente journals, and partly also in Germany, that the "passivity" of German foreign trade has been deliberately described as greater than it actually is, because of the reparations problem. Unfortunately, it is impossible to check German export figures by the import figures of other

abroad, that the growth in exports would be sufficient to supply the necessary surplus for reparations payments.

Nor would a settlement be final in another sense, for on the outbreak of an imperialist war, which will necessarily be a world war, all the agreements arising from the last war about inter-allied debts and reparations will be thrown to the winds.

We repeat: the essence of the negotiations now beginning does not lie in the determination of the amount to be paid in reparations, but in the questions of the powers and their policies; whether the German bourgeoisie will succeed in carrying on their policy of "tacking" between the British bloc, the American bloc, and the Soviet Union; or whether they will be forced to join either America or England; and whether the hostile interests of the British and French bourgeoisie with regard to more freedom for Germany's imperialist activity will be so great that for the time being, a new settlement of the reparations problem will be impossible.

countries because of the different methods of compiling statistics adopted by different countries. For example, goods exported via Holland, Belgium or Austria often appear in the statistics of the country of destination as Dutch, Belgian or Austrian goods, so that no comparison would have any validity.